

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-12. (canceled)

13. (currently amended) A flexible foodstuff transfer installation comprising:

a transfer conveyer for transferring foodstuff, and

a plurality of transfer pieces, each comprising a pair of erect flat spacer members connected to both end sides of connection members that constitute a transfer passage of articles including foodstuff, are connected to each other so as to be capable of moving in the direction of transfer relative to each other,

wherein said transfer pieces can be piled in a vertical spiral by allowing an upper side positioned spacer member to rise on a spacer member positioned right under said upper side positioned spacer member,

wherein each spacer member has a contact face extending parallel to the transfer direction at the lower end thereof,

wherein an inside chain to allow one of the pair of the spacer members riding on the inside chain to move together with the inside chain and an outside chain to allow the other of the pair of the spacer members riding on the outside chain to move together with the outside chain are provided,

wherein each of the spacer members contacts the chain with said contact face to ride on the chain,

wherein the inside chain and outside chain are driven by a single motor via a drive shaft,

wherein said inside chain and outside chain are looped respectively over an inside sprocket and an outside sprocket driven by said single motor via the drive shaft, the chains being composed to be an endless chain respectively to

allow the transfer pieces to be advanced to the spiral and then to return to the sprockets, ~~and~~

wherein a speed change gear drive is mounted in the drive shaft extending between the inside sprocket and outside sprocket to reduce the rotation speed of the inside sprocket to be slower than the rotation speed of the outside sprocket, and

wherein the spirally piled transfer conveyor is accommodated in a heat insulated room in which a refrigerating machine is installed, an endless transfer conveyor is composed by connecting the entrance and exit of the transfer conveyor to and from the heat insulated room, and the refrigerating machine is installed in a space formed inside the spiral of the spirally piled transfer conveyor.

14. (previously presented) The flexible transfer installation according to claim 13, wherein axes of rotation shafts to drive the sprockets are disposed horizontally.

15. (original) The flexible transfer installation according to claim 13, wherein said transfer conveyer is guided looping over guide pulleys from the way-out of the spiral pile to the portion where the transfer conveyer rides on the inside chain and outside chain to be advanced to the spiral pile, whereby the pair of spacer members contact the outer periphery of the pulleys.

16. (previously presented) The flexible transfer installation according to claim 13, wherein the ratio of number of teeth of the inside gear connected to the inside sprocket to that of the outside gear connected to the outside sprocket is determined to coincide with the ratio of the curvature radius of the outside chain at the outside sprocket to that of the inside chain at the inside sprocket.

17. (original) The flexible transfer installation according to claim 13, wherein said inside chain and outside chain are composed to be curved chains deformable in lateral direction perpendicular to the direction along the transfer direction of the transfer passage.

18. (original) The flexible transfer installation according to claim 13, wherein are provided tension pulleys each to be looped over by the inside chain and outside chain and tension springs each to pull each tension pulley for tensioning the chains.

19. (currently amended) The flexible transfer installation according to claim 13, wherein ~~the transfer conveyer is accommodated in an insulated room provided with a refrigerating machine and the~~ single motor is installed outside the heat insulated room.